

PRIORITY

(Security Classification)

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : Amembassy BAGHDAD

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

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9 For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.
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	Com-10 11-3-59	Ref-1 IRC-8 ICA-11 NEA-3 E-3 ARMY-5 CIA-10 IN-7 FPC-1 AIR-3

SUBJECT: GOI Response to Diversion of the Alwand River

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The GOI responded quickly to the severe water shortage that developed in the Khanaqin area following Iranian diversion of the Alwand River in July. The GOI has six of its own rigs drilling water wells at Khanaqin, and engaged the Ralph M. Parsons Company (an American firm) for deep well work without allowing time for even an initial survey of the area. The GOI estimates that a total flow of 45,000 gallons per minute will be necessary to insure an adequate water supply.

Parsons drilled to 900 feet, but did not find water at that depth. In backing up, a potential flow of 600 gallons per minute was found at 150 feet. Obtaining 600 gallons per minute, however, depends upon the use of adequate pumps.

The water obtained from the wells already drilled has proven to be, contrary to initial doubts, of high quality, suitable for both drinking and irrigation. In Parson's opinion, however, the target flow of 45,000 gallons per minute is unrealistically high and quite probably will not be obtained.

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If Iran diverted the Alwand in the middle of the dry season as retaliation for Iraqi action in the Shatt-al-Arab or as a device to force discussion of outstanding issues, particularly the Shatt, their move seems to have failed. The GOI has accepted the Alwand diversion as an accomplished fact, and is taking speedy action to obtain an independent water supply.

For the Ambassadors

John Miles
Counselor of Embassy
for Economic Affairs

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